

SEPTEMBER 15, 2005SKOKIE RESIDENT VIVIAN ZAPATA SELECTED AS "OFFICIAL ARTIST" OF THE LATIN GRAMMYS

SCHAKOWSKY CONGRATULATES ZAPATA, FORMERLY RECOGNIZED AS THE WINNER OF THE CONGRESSIONAL "ARTISTIC DISCOVERY" COMPETITION

SKOKIE, IL -- Vivian Zapata, a lifetime Skokie resident and sophomore art student at the University of Illinois, has been selected as the official artist of the 6th Annual Latin Grammy Awards. Zapata will travel to Los Angeles to participate in the Latin GRAMMY Awards ceremony at the Shrine Auditorium on November 3rd. Additionally, Latino Art Beat and the University of Illinois' School of Art and Design will reward Zapata by funding her tuition for the 2005-2006 school year.

Upon hearing the news of Zapata's victory, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky said: "I am so proud of Vivian and delighted her work is receiving the national attention it deserves. She is an inspiration to students across the country. Because of her talent, focus, and drive, Vivian is achieving her dream. Her talent has led her to the nation's capitol, to an outstanding arts program, and now to L.A. for the Latin GRAMMYS. I can't wait to see where her artwork takes her next. I hope to see it on display in Chicago one day soon."

The Latin GRAMMY Awards, in conjunction with Latino Art Beat, held its first-ever poster art competition this year as part of its mission to encourage education and arts in the Latino community. The competition was open to high school and college students in major cities across the country. Zapata's painting features stylized musicians and dancers illustrated in bright, sweeping explosions of color. She drew on both her Mexican and Colombian heritage, and her love of Latin music, to produce this lively piece. Zapata's work will be featured on the poster, invitation, tickets, and program of the Latin GRAMMYS.

Zapata, currently a sophomore painting major at the University of Illinois' School of Art and Design, honed her art skills in the Skokie area. Throughout elementary school and junior high, Zapata took art classes at both the Village Art Gallery and Savina Studios. In 2004, Zapata won her first major art competition victory when she was selected as the 9th Congressional District winner of *An Artistic Discovery*, a national art contest designed to encourage and reward the artistic ability of America's high school students. Zapata then traveled to Washington to participate in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for her painting with U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky. Zapata's artwork hung in the U.S. Capitol from the summer of 2004 to the summer of 2005.

Vivian Zapata is available for interviews in English or Spanish which can be arranged by contacting Ben LaBolt at 202-226-6903.